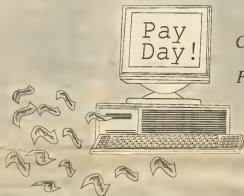


# THE COMPUTER PAPER

British Columbia's Computer Information Source

December 1987 Issue 1

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*Wendy Wood's  
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*BBS Listings*

# THE COMPUTER PAPER

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## Contents

### Columns

PC's and Compatibles .....	12
Macintosh .....	14
Atom .....	15
Amega .....	16
The Trade Market Report .....	17

### Departments

Letters to the Editor .....	3
Wendy Wood's Newsbytes .....	4
888 Numbers .....	10
User Group Listings .....	11
Computer Calendar .....	12
Classifieds .....	22
Index of Advertisers .....	23

### Features

Impressions of CD ROM .....	20
What's a Neural Network? .....	19
Buying a PC-Close .....	17
Used Computers Are They Worth the Risk? .....	24
Bullfinch's New Accounting Software for the Mac .....	23
PayMaster Canadian Payroll Package .....	7

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## CONTROL DATA DOWNGRADES CANADIAN OPERATION

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. (NT) — Control Data Canada Ltd. has laid off 10 employees and discontinued responsibility for the Canadian operations to its U.S. parent. Former chairman and president T.S. Allan and former senior vice-president of sales and marketing Gary Glover have retired. Rather than replacing them, Control Data Canada has announced that the vice-presidents in charge of its two business units will form a "senior management team" for the Canadian operation but that each business unit will report directly to the parent company in Minneapolis. Aveland Eklund, vice-president of computer systems and services, will assume responsibility for day-to-day corporate operations at Control Data Canada, "for the company and in a joint release."

**CONTACT: CONTROL DATA CANADA, LTD.,** 1815 Information Court, Mississauga, Ont. L5M 1E1, (416) 676-6640

## DISTRIBUTOR MIGHT GO PUBLIC IN TORONTO, NOT VANCOUVER

OTTAWA (NT) — Frank Computer Products Inc. has dropped plans to list its stock on the Vancouver Stock Exchange and might seek a listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange instead, CANADIAN COMPUTER DEALER NEWS reports. The paper quotes Mike Anderson, president of Frank, as saying the company wants to look for a larger financial market than Vancouver. He said a listing on the Toronto exchange, Canada's largest, is possible within the next 12 months. Anderson also says the company wants to remain 100 percent Canadian, a goal it has accomplished in the past.

## PROVINCE GIVES TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

TORONTO (NT) — The Province of Ontario has announced C\$24 million in grants from its Premier's Council Technology Fund. They will go to three Ontario companies working on airborne radar, analytical instruments and computer-aided design. The projects are all being funded through a new educational research and development fund set up as part of the C\$1 billion technology fund. Aerospace Standard of Toronto will get C\$3.8 million to help develop an automated factory in co-operation with IBM Canada Ltd., Markham, Ont., Spar Aerospace Ltd. and Canadian General Electric Ltd. of Toronto, the University of Toronto, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont., and the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. Automation Ltd. of Ontario will get C\$9.48 million to develop radar for reconnaissance work, and Spectra, a subsidiary of MDS Health Group Ltd. of Toronto, will get C\$17 million to develop key analytic instruments for measuring trace amounts of industrial chemicals.

## IBM LAB CELEBRATES 50TH AN- NIVERSARY

TORONTO (NT) — IBM Canada Ltd.'s Toronto Development Laboratory celebrated its 25th anniversary in the beginning of December. The third largest private-sector laboratory in Canada and the fourth-largest software lab in IBM worldwide, the

Toronto facility has grown rapidly in recent years to about 1,100 employees. Wayne Anderson, director of the laboratory, said the lab's responsibilities include software development for IBM's mid-range systems, image systems, and programming language standards for IBM worldwide.

## SCULLEY SPECULATES ON FUTURE AT BOOK LAUNCH

TORONTO (NT) — Book-based computers that talk, take telephone messages and can retrieve information from most systems without specific instructions from the user may be commonplace by the early 21st century. But even then, there may be no real market for home computers. So said John Sculley, chairman of Apple Computer Inc., at the Canadian branch of his book "Odyssey: Papa to Apple," on Nov. 23. Sculley's Canadian publisher, Publishers and Writers of Toronto, arrived at an assessment of Apple dealers, journalists and other guests to Toronto's King Edward Hotel for a lunch con that marked the Apple chairman's first visit to Canada since his Papa-Odyssey days. As part of his after-lunch speech, Sculley showed a short video depicting his view of a possible computer of the future, much like the Dynabook concept presented at Xerox Corp's Palo Alto Research Center. Sculley pointed out that his hypothetical machine was an evolutionary step, not a revolution, although most of them are experimental at present. He said new technologies usually need a critical test period of about 15 years. Sculley also commented that Apple is moving a way from home computers, a market he thinks is largely saturated at present. All that exists today are "home-business" markets in which people use computers at home so they can bring work home from the office, he said. "There will eventually be a home computer market," he said, "but my sense is that will be many years into the future."

Sculley also took the opportunity to call for change in education. Students must learn to think and not just to memorize and follow instructions, he said. "Our educational system in the U.S. is largely focused toward training young people for the early industrial age," he said. Sculley added that he couldn't envision on the Canadian educational system, but NEWSBYTES CANADA believes his comments apply as well here.

## VANCOUVER FIRM UNVEILS RE- PORT WRITER FOR LOTUS 1-2-3 DRASE

VANCOUVER (NT) — Krugger Data Corp. of Vancouver has introduced ProMark IQ, which produces reports from Microsoft's Lotus 1-2-3, dBase III and Krugger's own ProMark database software. David Galloway, senior marketing representative for the firm, said the package is adapted, under license, from software developed by a U.S. firm. It can extract data from 1-2-3 and dBase files to produce reports with summary totals and perform "all kinds of calculations" on the data. ProMark IQ can also produce graphs, Galloway said.

continued on page 13

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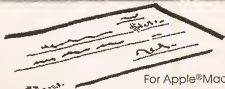
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# PayMaster Canadian Payroll Software

by Bill Hayes

It's worthwhile to put your company payroll on a personal computer? Yes and no. It depends. The PayMaster program by Ebs Software does a good job of speeding up the data entry and reducing subtle book-keeping errors of payroll processing. It's the process of getting that information back into your existing bookkeeping system that gets the story of this program into question. Let's have a look at what the program does well at.

## System Requirements

The program runs on IBM PC or compatible systems with a minimum of 256K of memory. The program needs no network. It is possible according to Ebs, to run up to 75 employees on a one disk system, 75 to 150 on a dual floppy system and 150 to 999 on a hard disk.

## Set-up Routine

The system set up is a simple menu driven procedure run through a file called *Initialization*. Ebs says you should a keyboard maintain the system on one, two or a hard drive. The short manual (32 pages + appendices) included in the package from a good job of taking you through the initial routine.

## Creating a Company

The initial bookkeeping year is the main menu window. You are advised as a first step to create a new company master file to hold the T-4's which is created at the end of the year have that information on disk.

## Security

You can also at this stage set up five level password protection. Level 1 has access to all functions. Level 2 can change everything but the company name and the Security Functions. Level 3 is allowed access to the Department, Job, Historical, Change and Print files. Level 4 is only allowed to access Department, Job and Historical files. Passwords can be up to 8 letters, but once you start to use passwords, every time you enter the program, you will be required to enter your password.

## Windows

The program makes intelligent use of windows to assist in data handling. For example when you are in the change writing file, as you toggle through the fields, a window box will pop up to show your options for each thing as: employee number or Job-Change category. Another window pops up to explain: you enter the Employee, Change, Department, Job-Change or Historical files. Then you are given the option to Add, Update or Delete on the file.

## Employee Files

The next step is to enter employees into the program. This process is greatly facilitated if you have everyone's Tax Identification form up to date.

A few potential problems arise as entry comes here. The first I encountered was in entering Vacation Pay rate. The field is defined with a number and then Ebs says after the decimal, A few percent

deduction would then look like 4.000. This approach I found somewhat less than intuitive and managed to enter a .04 rate which resulted in .04% rate rather than 4%.

A second potentially confusing area I discovered was in defining the ending point of employment. Ebs are focused on IMMIDY. The program uses a code of "000001" to define employees who are still working for you. Since the majority of employees who you are adding the time to enter into your own payroll program are likely to be still employed by you, it would have speeded up data entry to have the program default to that value except in those rare cases you are entering an employee who has already left. Again as all in the manual, but the best judge of a program is what how far you can go without looking at the manual.

The third problem I encountered was in defining the claim amount. Here the program differed slightly from the manual. The manual shows a screen with the word "Claim". The program in fact says "TD4 Claim" which as we suggested that I



Start-up Screen

should enter the code used by the government to define the different categories. This idea is unfortunately the next field "TD4 Claim" again not in the manual, which is a completed field. This suggestion by this layout is that all our need state in the government defined classification, and the program will fill in the next field. In fact it doesn't work this way. It turns out that you are supposed to enter the actual claim amount in the "TD4 Claim" field. Surprisingly, nothing shows up in the "TD4 Claim" field. One wonder why it is there at all. All this trouble after seeing the explanation of the manual. Another hint was given by the format shown in the message box at the bottom of the screen when you entered the "TD4 Claim" field which is (XXXX.XX).

Of course all these problems were minor, and nothing that a quick perusal of the manual couldn't solve, but nevertheless could stand to be improved.

## Departments Job-Change

This is where for me the program fell down the most. The company for which I was doing the

program up has multiple departments and employees who sometimes contribute hours to those different departments. PayMaster does not handle this situation well. Acadia's company confirmed the fact. The option they suggested, was to not use Departments at all, instead use the Job-Change file to divide up the labour. This suggestion has only limited applicability, because the reporting from the Job-Change is only very rudimentary. It does not break down the amounts between wages and the various benefits such as L.I.C., CPP etc.

This brings me to my final and major complaint against PayMaster. The reports PayMaster generates seem more geared at getting me to purchase my chapter from Ebs Software than at providing accessible information like Ebs says that you have three options with the program: 1) use their pre-printed sheets and report sheets which means buying a whole other series of chapters and entering the adjustments directly in the General Ledger; 2) print out report pages, and transfer the information to another accounting system option; 3) you list to customize the system at a rate of \$25/hour to include the report labels. The first option of buying from Ebs is really the only choice that is reasonable if you want to use this program. This of course is the about the time, but may not be so far your company. The second option does 'really' work because of the way the program prints out just raw numbers with out any header information (it uses the pre-printed forms you see). The report only up with a closely grouped bundle of numbers with no labels to help sort out what is what. The third option of engaging in custom programming does not seem reasonable for a program designed to competitively save time and money.

## A Bug?

In the process of discovering about the differences between the Departments and Job-Change approach to breaking out payroll, I discovered a bug in the program. I first entered a number of Departments, then I decided to delete them all and use the Job-Change approach. When I moved the cursor into the Job-Change area while entering a Change, instead of the Job-Change category window appearing, I got lines of code on the screen. I had to re-install the system to get out of this problem losing the data I had entered as up to this point.

## Additional features

The program allows you to enter pay holiday pay in each pay period, or accumulate a total specified date. The way to enter pay rows, is to enter the Employee file, choose Update and then change the Accumulate to Y. The program then will include the accumulated holiday pay up to and including the current pay period.

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